DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 143 405 JC 770 429

AUTHOR Bers, John A.
TITLE Building the Planning Process into College Management.
INSTITUTION Gadsden State Junior Coll., Ala.
PUB DATE 20 Jul 77
NOTE 26p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Change; Administrative Policy; Administrator Responsibility; Budgeting; Change Strategies; *College Administration; *College Planning; Community Colleges; Decision Making; *Junior Colleges; *Management by Objectives; Master Plans; Money Management

ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the methods used by a "developing institution" (Gadsden State Junior College) to arrive at an institution-wide system of long-range planning and management by objectives. A needs assessment identified the following areas which more systematic planning and management might address: a contraction of the college's resource base, a shifting student market, and an increase in the size and complexity of the college. Management objectives were then designed to cope with these needs. Task forces developed institutional goals, defined organizational relationships, and created a planning model, after which the top administrators participated in a pilot planning year. The second year involved middle-level administrators, with a task force established to research and recommend changes in the budgetary process. The two-year planning process resulted in increased budgetary management and a clarification of areas of administrative responsibility, but did not encompass accountability and student responsiveness. Full implementation of long-range planning is expected to be complete in two additional years. (RT)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED143405

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

John A. Bers

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

BUILDING THE PLANNING PROCESS INTO COLLEGE MANAGEMENT

by

John A. Bers
Director of Planning and Research
Gadsden State Junior College
Gadsden, Alabama 35903
July 20, 1977

JC 770 429

BUILDING THE PLANNING PROCESS INTO COLLEGE MANAGEMENT

by John A. Bers
Director of Planning and Research
Gadsden State Junior College
Gadsden, Alabama 35903
July 20, 1977

ABSTRACT

This paper describes how Gadsden State Junior College, with federal Title III support, developed a broadly accepted planning framework that enhances each administrator's ability to formulate and implement plans for his own area while providing for college-wide coordination and responsiveness to significant internal and external change. Key to the system's success is the planning director. Beyond providing technical support, he must build organizational support and understanding and expedite key planning decisions. Results after two years include a priorities-based resource allocation process, improved utilization of faculty, and broader, more effective participation in institutional decision-making.

CONTENTS

Problem Definition 1

Areas of Need Requiring Better Planning 4

Objectives: Specifications for the Planning & Management Process . . 7

Methodology 9

Results 18

Discussion 20

References 23

BUILDING THE PLANNING PROCESS INTO COLLEGE MANAGEMENT

by

John A. Bers
Director of Planning & Research
Gadsden State Junior College

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Gadsden State is one of the many so-called developing institutions eligible for funds under Title III of the Higher Education Act. A requirement of these grants is that the institution include a planning, management, and evaluation (PME) component. Specifically, Gadsden State's grant application proposed to subsume existing administrative operations under an institution-wide system of long-range planning and management-by-objectives, supported by institutional research and management development within a four-year period from 1975 to 1979. I was appointed in April, 1975, to direct this effort. Bold words, these, but rather more difficult to execute than to articulate in a grant application. Nevertheless, after two of the four years of the grant period considerable progress has been made. This paper attempts to summarize this progress.

In several respects, my assignment seemed fairly straightforward. The grant had been awarded and both time and funds seemed adequate. Gadsden State had rather little formal planning and research taking place, few written policies, no management development program, and an informal day-to-day oriented management style. Being a fairly new college, Gadsden State had few traditions hindering its ability to act and respond to change. The administration of the college is fairly powerful relative to the faculty: administrative staff, rather than the faculty, make key decisions about personnel, budgets, programs, and policies. We have an active professional association but no union and no collective barganing. At the same time, while Gadsden State is

part of a state system of junior colleges, the system is loosely coupled compared to many other state systems. While state appropriations, tuition, and some key policies are set at the state level, each institution has broad authority to allocate resources and set institutional operating policies. We are in a financial squeeze but not a life-or-death crisis; it is generally assumed that the college has the ability to solve its problems and prevail.

On the other hand, the need for changing the way we did things, or for moving to a systematic process of planning, management, and evaluation was not at all obvious to many administrators, including the president, despite what was said in the grant application. After all, Gadsden State had been planning and managing itself with apparent success long before the Title III grant was awarded. What differed most between the way the college planned and managed in the past and what was called for in the grant application seemed to boil down to differences in style and semantics, and to substance only to a minor extent.

The grant application called for our administration to become more "results oriented." I found that the administrators at Gadsden State were already highly "results oriented." The problem, if there was one, was that the results to which they were oriented are not those that institutional researchers bandy about. In fact, I still marvel at the sophistication, the ingenuity, the creativity that our college's leaders apply in arriving at arrangements and accommendations that achieve what they want or avoid what they don't want.

The grant application pointed out a need to develop better data with which to develop plans and measure results. Yet, in the course of striving toward their chosen results, our administrators go to considerable lengths to collect, store, and analyze information about their environment. I'm somewhat awed by the ability of some of our leaders to keep accurate tabs on the obligations,

special needs and interests, and so on of the many board members, legislators, community leaders, and others whose support is crucial when the administrators need

to get something done.

The grant application noted that planning at the college seemed to operate on a day-to-day, crisis-oriented basis and called for a long-range planning horizon of five-years. And yet in instances where it counted, such as in planning to get tenure or retirement planning, our administrators were already operating on a five, and in some cases, even thirty-year time horizon.

These remarks are not intended facetiously; they are merely observations about our administrators and about human nature: man is a goal-seeking animal who works incessantly and sometimes over extended time periods to achieve goals he sets for himself, and as a part of this process he can and does collect and analyze great amounts of data. The most poignant observation is that, to a much greater extent than we researchers may wish to concede, college administrations and administrators have evolved a remarkably highly developed "informal" planning system without our help; one that is just results-oriented, data-based, and long-range enough to fit their particular circumstances. The strategy I have adopted over the past two years was based on this realization: that the problem for this institutional researcher was not to overcome any apparent recalcitrance or unresponsiveness to change or innovation within the institution, but to recognize and then to capitalize on the institution's capacity to plan and adapt, to upgrade an existing planning process rather than to attempt to replace it with an entirely new one. The most basic condition of my success would be my ability to "exploit the inevitable," as General DeGaulle was fond of saying, to seek out or piece together a planning process which our administrators would find useful in achieving outcomes to which they were already committed. With luck, there would be a minimum winning coalition, a sufficient number of administrators and others with their own personal stake in the process that it would all hang together.

This paper describes the process we went through of finding out our administrator's

real and perceived needs and piecing together a planning process that would have something in it for everybody, or at least, for that minimum winning coalition. Accordingly, the paper is concerned less with what planning process we arrived at and more with how we arrived at it.

AREAS OF NEED REQUIRING BETTER PLANNING

The needs that I was able to identify which more systematic planning and management might address fall into three catagories: the pressures resulting from a contracting resource base, those resulting from the changing nature of our student market, and those arising from growth in size and complexity of the college's internal environment.

The Contracting Resource Base--One of the issues nearest and dearest to our key administrators has been that of the contracting resource base. Gadsden State has faced all the same problems of resource contraction as most other colleges, plus a few of its own: the leveling and decline of enrollment among traditional college-age students, increasing costs, a tenured faculty locked onto a rather high (second highest in the Southeast) salary schedule, a dramatic decline in veteran enrollment, and, as if this weren't enough, a stricter application of state appropriation guidelines that eliminated appropriations for its community service and continuing education operations, which had amounted to a substantial proportion of the college's income.

The contraction in the college's resource base has important implications in two general areas: efficiency and effectiveness. The first consequence of financial contraction is the pressure to maximize the productivity of existing staff--maximizing class sizes, workloads, etc., without sacrificing quality. At GSJC this pressure has focused attention on such efficiency issues as projecting enrollment and demand levels, determining staffing levels (both actual and desirable), staff evaluation, and the budgetary process. The financial squeeze has also focussed attention on the effectiveness question. When the squeeze becomes severe enough, the traditional

across-the-board percentage reduction can actually cripple the effectiveness of certain programs. It becomes necessary to make choices about which programs to continue and which to phase out or discontinue. These sorts of choices require judgments about the relative value of programs that aren't strictly comparable, that may have differing objectives. This is where a common yardstick--clearly defined, broadly acceptable central institutional mission and goals--must be applied.

The Shifting Student Market--The second area of strongly felt pressure has arisen from the shifting characteristics of the college's student market. Our traditional student population, the eighteen-year-olds and the veterans, are in more or less rapid decline. The new clienteles, particularly the adults and the senior citizens, offer seemingly limitless possibilities for services and programs, but the state is still not appropriating funds for continuing education. The college is experiencing severe competition for students and resources from public and private colleges, trade schools, proprietary schools, and industrial firms offering internal training programs. At the same time, our students, particularly the older ones, are making new kinds of demands on the college: times and places at which programs are scheduled can be critical to those students who also hold full-time jobs. Today our students, young and old alike, have less time and inclination than previous students to stand on lines and put up with red tape. Teaching techniques, styles, and materials that worked with eighteen-year-olds are not always appropriate to the needs and interests of the older student. Their needs have changed and diversified in the support services as well; counseling, advisement, job placement, financial aid, student activities, etc. And the college continues to attract large numbers of academically underprepared students, whose particular learning needs place great demands on the resources of the staff. Like the contraction in the resource base, the shifting student market forces to the surface fundamental questions about the college's mission and scope. What really is our business? A traditional junior college parallelling the first two years of a senior institution? An educational service station, serving the community's

life-long learning needs on a stop-in, stop-out basis? A sort of upward-bound way-station for the academically underprepared? Into how many of these businesses can the college afford to divide up its diminishing resources and still remain effective at all of them?

--Increasing Size and Complexity of the College--At the same time as Gadsden State's environment has grown in complexity, unpredictability, and challenge, the college has grown larger and more complex internally. A source of increasing concern to both mid-management and top management (but for different reasons) has been the communication and control problems brought on by the college's increased size and complexity as an institution. When the college was small and growing, it needed a strong entrepreneurial type leader who understood the college inside and out so that he could get crucial decisions made rapidly. As the college grew to a certain size, the president, even the key administrators, could no longer understand the details--the fine structure--and had to rely to an ever greater extent on professionals on the faculty and staff. This change shifted the role of both top administrators and mid-management. Mid-management became the real program leaders that the president and deans had been in the past, in the sense of keeping detailed tabs on day-to-day operations. Top management, on the other hand, found itself in the new, unaccustomed, and rather uncomfortable role of having to get things done through mid-level managers. At Gadsden State the mid-management people, the division chairmen and coordinators, were usually from an academic or professional background and found themselves unfamiliar and awkward with handling "people" problems, budgeting, and the other responsibilities that managers have to cope with. And there was lack of clarity about the actual extent of their authority and whether it was commensurate with their responsibility. At the same time, top management people found it difficult to stop managing, to let go, to delegate, to avoid "meddling" in day-to-day operational affairs. Their problem was more elusive than that of the mid-managers; at least the

mid-managers had specific new responsibilities to cope with; top managers seemed to feel they were losing control and authority and wondered what they are supposed to do. This phenomenon has been documented in organizations of every kind; it seems to be a bonafide crisis that most organizations have to pass through as a part of their life cycle.[1] These pressures would seem to call for a reassessment and, most likely, a restructuring of administrative roles in the direction of more operational planning and management authority for mid-management and, for top management, more attention to strategic planning, program review, and priority-setting.

Coping with these three pressures--the contracting resource base, the shifting student market, and growth in internal size and complexity--are widely conceded to be central to the college's capacity to survive. If the planning and management process, in whatever form it takes, can help the college take the upper hand in these three areas, the chances are that the administration will regard it as more than a hollow paper exercise to comply with the Title III grant and that the process will enjoy the support of the minimum winning coalition within the college that I spoke of earlier.

OBJECTIVES: SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE PLANNING & MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The preceding needs assessment for a planning process made it possible for us to formulate a set of specifications which any planning and management system should fulfill. I wish I could report that we developed a set of system specifications as explicit as those I'm about to list; in reality, it was more of a process of groping toward a process that more or less fulfilled these specifications without their being clearly articulated at the time.

1. Effective Delegation--The process should provide for clear-cut and effective delegation of authority to administrators at the program manager level so that they can formulate plans for their area of responsibility, deploy the resources they need

---

[1]Bruce R. Scott, Stages of Corporate Development, Copyright 1971 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College

to accomplish their plans, monitor their progress, and correct discrepancies as necessary.

2. Enhance, Not Replace, Administrative Structure--The process should enhance the existing administrative structure rather than replace it with some sort of super planning body.

3. Coordination--At the same time, the process should provide for adequate coordination of planning both vertically, horizontally, and across time spans so that individual programs are directed toward the achievement of priority institutional goals.

4. Clear Delineation of Planning Responsibilities--I understand that a lot of planning and management systems have ended up with frustration and resentment because the administrators involved were being expected to do something without knowing exactly what to do, how to do it, and where to turn for help. Thus, the process should provide clear, understandable guidance to managers at all levels as to what their planning responsibilities are and how to carry them out.

5. Flexibility--Yet the process should be adaptable enough that each program manager can tailor it to serve his own management style and the uniqueness of his own program. It should also encourage and facilitate rapid response to new developments in the environment of the institution or its programs--such as new clienteles, new competition, and new technology.

6. Incorporate Resource Allocation Process--The planning system must incorporate the budgetary process, as that is where the real commitments to programs are made. If the budgetary process is not guided by the planning process, resources will go to programs according to criteria other than effectiveness and relevance to the institutional priorities identified during the planning process, and the planning process will be ignored. If resources are to be allocated according to program effectiveness and relevance, program effectiveness measures will be needed (alongside cost date), the more objective, valid, comparable across programs, etc., etc., the better.

7. Accomodate Existing Institutional Policies--Similarly, the planning process should accomodate major institutional policies and procedures concerning programs, personnel, and facilities so that policies can be developed as needed to facilitate the accomplishment of institutional and program objectives, and policies impeding their accomplishment can be revised or rescinded.

8. Broad Acceptance and Support--Finally, the planning process should have broad acceptance and support as "the way to get things accomplished in this institution." Without this support, the process will be disregarded in favor of other channels of communication and decision.

METHODOLOGY

--Getting the Process Started--So far I have been using the term "we" without defining who I am referring to. It was clear that some of the most important decisions about the shape the planning and management process was to take, whom it would serve, what it would do for them, etc. would have to be made very early on. I sensed right away that while I could propose answers, it would not be my place, as a staff officer reporting to the president, to decide them. These decisions were truly institutional in nature, and I felt the need to establish some sort of institution-wide oversight group that would have both the authority and the representativeness to speak for the interests of the college in guiding the development of the planning process, keeping the process on course, and giving it institution-wide prestige and visibility. To fill this need, one of the very first steps I took on my arrival was to work with the president to establish a Committee on Institutional Planning (CIP). So that the committee would enjoy enough influence and broad support around the campus to carry out its role, the president appointed to it the six top-level administrators of the college, two division chairpersons, two faculty members, and two students. The president is ex officio chairman; I was appointed operating chairman.

After some initial orientation to planning concepts, the CIP established three major taskforces, each chaired by a key administrator and drawing its membership from the faculty and staff. They included a taskforce on institutional goals, a taskforce on organizational relationships, and a planning prototype taskforce. Throughout this initial six-month period, the CIP provided guidance and oversight to the taskforces, seeing that they met scheduled deadlines, and seeing that their reocmmendations were reviewed by appropriate groups and revised where necessary, before passing them along to the president for final approval.

--Identifying Institutional Goals--The taskforce on institutional goals was assigned to identify the college's goals by a broadly participatory process. The taskforce used the Institutional Goals Inventory developed by ETS to survey opinion among administrators, faculty, students, and community. It developed several rounds of drafts for institution-wide review before recommending to the president a set of institutional goals supported by measurable performance indicators.

--Clarifying Areas of Responsibility--The taskforce on organizational relationships was responsible for studying the administrative structure of the college to identify the areas of responsibility within which each administrator is expected to plan. Its purpose was to minimize confusion and assure an adequate level of coordination among administrators when later on they were asked to formulate plans for thier area.

The taskforce drafted, circulated for discussion, and recommended to the president an updated table of organization and administrative flow chart and a "linear responsibility chart" relating people, responsibilities, and institutional goals.[2] (See Appendix)

---

[2]The development of the linear responsibility chart was described in an earlier paper by this writer, "A Simple Technique for Getting Started with MBO," presented at the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Association for Institutional Research.

--Developing a Planning Prototype--The third taskforce was assigned the responsibility of reviewing planning systems and models already in place elsewhere and selecting or adapting from among them a planning process that would come closest to fulfilling the specifications identified earlier. After studying a number of available systems the taskforce recommended a system pioneered by Dr. Philip Winstead at Furman University in South Carolina.[3] The basic idea of the Furman planning process is that institutional and program planning, whether formal or informal, is analogous to the planning steps of a person taking a trip. In planning his trip, he must answer the following questions: Where am I now? Where do I want to go? How do I want to travel? When do I want to depart and arrive? Who will go with me? What will it cost? How will I know when I've arrived? Since each administrator goes through this planning process for his own area anyway, according to Winstead's model, the purpose of having an institution-wide planning system is to upgrade an already-existing process, rather than to replace it with something entirely new and different.

One of the most attractive features of the Furman model is that it integrates into a single, easily understood system strategic planning, program planning, management-by-objectives, evaluation, budgeting, and policy development. A second attractive feature is its adaptability to the unique circumstances of each program; each administrator can selectively adapt those features needed for planning in his own area without impeding the effectiveness of the system. To help each manager formulate his plans, the model includes a so-called "planning book", a three ring binder divided into ten sections that correspond approximately to the questions in the trip analogy. The planning book is a portable loose-leaf filing system, rather than a "book", in which each administrator or program manager can store the information, guidelines, and forms he needs to answer each trip analogy question and thereby to plan more effectively for his area. Each page in the planning book has a file number and date, rather than a page number, allowing for continuous updating of information and

[3]The Furman model is described more fully in E.J. Green and P.C. Winstead, "Systematic Institutional Planning." Educational Technology, July, 1975, pp. 33-35

guidelines. Each page also contains an Originator/Distribution heading so that any manager can originate and distribute an issuance to any others. These features help to ensure that at any given time each planning book holder has the information he needs, but no more, in its most current form, to plan for his area.

The following is a brief synopsis of the planning process as it was adapted by the planning prototype taskforce and was later implemented by the college.

In Section 10, the manager stores information concerning the basic nature of his program and the institution (mission statements, goals, background, etc.) In this section, he answers the question, "Who am I" as a program or institution, "What are the key results I am expected to achieve?" A program's or institution's mission must be clarified before meaningful planning can proceed. Often this step is slighted, and the resulting confusion produces overlap, duplications, and gaps in plans, objectives, etc. among programs. The Linear Responsibility Chart discussed above proved a valuable aid to our managers in clarifying their program missions.

Sections 20 and 30 concern the question "Where are you?" Section 20 (Environment) focuses on the developments in the institution's or program's environment that have a significant impact on its performance. Two key elements are information about the target population (community needs assessments, job market data, etc.) and the manager's competition (how he is positioned relative to his competition on key areas of performance). In Section 30 (Assumptions) the key environmental developments are projected into the future and assumptions about uncertain and uncontrollable events are explicitly stated. Key assumptions include target population projections, enrollment and revenue projections, and job market forecasts.

Sections 40 and 50 concern the question "Where do you want to go?" Section 40 (Capabilities/Opportunities) affords each manager the opportunity to reflect upon and make judgments about the information developed in the preceding sections. In this part of the planning process, the manager attempts to discern in his environment opportunities for development or latent potentials within his program that could

be more fully harnessed. Section 40 also provides for an annual review of current performance based on data developed in Section 100 (Evaluation), so that weaknesses can be identified for correction and strengths can be capitalized upon. At Gadsden State, the capabilities/opportunities analysis is undertaken at each level in the administrative hierarchy from bottom to top, so that key problems or opportunities identified at the operating level have a chance to bubble up to the top, to be acted upon at later stages of the planning process.

Precise, quantified objectives (Section 50) are set only after each manager has analyzed his program relative to its environment in the four preceding sessions. Objectives in this planning process represent the manager's informed judgment of the best fit between the opportunities and constraints of his environment and the capabilities and resources of his program or institution. We're aware that many of the most significant educational outcomes cannot be quantified without tending to trivialize them. What we do instead is to look for performance indicators which, if achieved at a certain level, would constitute reasonably objective and broadly agreed-upon evidence that an objective is being achieved. But the final determination as to whether an objective was actually achieved is judgmental.

Policies and Procedures (Section 60 of the planning book) are among the most important tools available to the manager to see that results are achieved through coordinated action. They reduce the infinite variability of ways to achieve an objective to a smaller, relatively manageable set of acceptable alternative approaches which still offer the subordinate program managers enough latitude to respond adaptively to particular situations. The longer I have been in educational administration, the more I have come to appreciate the value of a set of organizational policies and procedures in facilitating coordination and reducing confusion and conflict. While existing policies and procedures are incorporated in, rather than replaced by, the planning process, each one is subject to the question, is it impeding

achievement of results. If so, the planning process provides a mechanism for revising or rescinding it.

Having reached agreement on the objectives they plan to achieve and the broad policies and procedures within which they will operate, program managers are given the opportunity (Sections 70-90) to develop and schedule specific programs of action to achieve their objectives (Section 70), to staff them out (Section 80), cost them out (Section 90), coordinate them with affected individuals in the college, and propose them to higher echelons for approval.

Programs and projects which are approved undergo a periodic performance review (Section 100) to determine if they are going as planned, meeting their objectives and, if not, whether corrective steps or a reappraisal of assumptions or objectives is in order.

--The First Year Pilot Run--When the three taskforces had completed their work the next key decision facing the CIP was to determine whether to proceed with the chosen planning system and at what level in the college. It was clear that the system would have to undergo extensive modification and pilot testing before it was serviceable for Gadsden State. The CIP decided to conduct a pilot run of the planning process with the president and top six administrators reporting to him. The first year pilot run of the planning process was really not much more than that: an opportunity for the six key administrators to familiarize themselves with the process--with conducting a capabilities analysis, formulating objectives, developing and scheduling some smaller projects such as a publicity campaign, a site development project, or a student information system. And while the administrators went through the steps, two factors hindered the process from becoming truly integrated into the ongoing management of the institution. First, the process did not include the middle and lower level managers - those who actually formulate detailed plans to carry out the institution's work. This meant that the kinds of projects included in the process

were of necessity peripheral to the ongoing management process. Second, the pilot run did not incorporate the budgetary process. This meant that projects included in the process either had to be already funded (which would seem to rob the planning process of its significance) or involve amounts that were small enough that they could be drawn from existing program budgets.

--The Second Year of Implementation: Building in the Budgetary Process--Both problems were alleviated during the second year of the planning process. On the recommendation of the CIP, the president extended the planning process to second echelon administrators (directors and associate deans), individuals more directly involved in program planning and administration. At the end of the second year the process was extended to those most immediately involved in day-to-day program management, the division chairpersons, the coordinators, and the support service supervisors. The CIP attacked head-on the second impediment, the lack of coordination with the budgetary process, by establishing a taskforce to study the existing budgetary process and to develop and recommend a policy on budget preparation, review, and approval.

In its analysis of the existing budgetary process the taskforce identified several factors that made it inconsistent with the planning process: For practical purposes, only the nonsalary operating expenses were budgeted by program managers; the business manager and president handled the salary items, and capital equipment items were budgeted from a separate fund. The effect of this was to reduce severely the range of resources which program managers had the authority to deploy to achieve their program objectives.

Secondly, the budget was on an annual basis, which tended to favor projects that would "pan out" within the next year and penalize projects which had heavy start-up costs but which wouldn't begin producing results for over a year. Since the books were closed at the end of each year and unexpended program budgets were

returned to the general fund, program managers were motivated to expend all their budgets annually rather than conserve for longer haul projects.

Thirdly, the budgetary process had been developed to work, and indeed worked well, in times of growth. Where funds were insufficient to cover every desired application, across-the-board cuts were applied with little real detriment to anyone. This process was widely conceded to encourage padding of budget requests and to penalize the conservative budgeters. In the current circumstances of contraction however, the across-the-board cut procedure could cripple certain programs, as mentioned earlier.

The Policy on Budget Preparation, Review, and Approval which was eventually approved by the president alleviated many of these problems. Both capital equipment and salary items were placed within the budgets proposed by program managers, thereby increasing their ability to deploy the full range of resources within their programs to support their plans and objectives. The policy extended the period which proposed budgets were to cover to five years. This encouraged program managers to think of the long-range budgetary consequences of their plans (for example, hiring a new instructor or awarding tenure). The policy included also included a provision that program managers could carry over unexpended balances to the following year "with justification" to encourage conservation.

Most importantly, the policy established an orderly procedure whereby program managers could compete for funds for both new and continuing programs on an equal footing based on the contribution of the program to institutional goals and priorities. It was this provision of the policy that really built the budgetary process into the planning and management system. The vehicle which the policy created for administering this procedure was the Priorities Advisory Committee, composed of the six administrators reporting to the president and six faculty members elected by the faculty at-large.

The policy calls for a three stage process for arriving at a final budget. In the first stage the Priorities Advisory Committee reviews existing programs with respect to expenditure levels and results achieved. It then sets initial budget level guidelines for each of the seven major program categories based on what the committee believes to represent survival without significant compromise in quality. It may also recommend that certain activities be discontinued where they make no significant contribution to institutional goals. Funds remaining unallocated are then assigned to a venture fund.

In the second stage of the process, program managers prepare their program plans and budgets within the budget guidelines. Where they have pressing needs that the Priorities Committee didn't anticipate or new programs and projects they wish to propose, they may prepare a request for additional funds from the venture fund.

In the third stage of the process, the Priorities Committee reviews all proposals for new programs and projects, and priority ranks them based upon their contribution to institutional goals, and upon the amount in the venture fund. With the Priorities Committee's recommendations in hand the president makes final decisions about which new programs and projects will be authorized. As of this writing the Priorities Advisory Committee has recommended preliminary program budget guidelines which were approved by the president. Program managers are presently formulating budgets within them.

Another step taken in the second year toward implementation of the planning process was the revision, updating, and incorporation of the College's badly outdated faculty handbook into a college-wide Policies and Procedures Manual. Like the Planning Book, the Manual serves as a p table loose-leaf filing system housing those policies and procedures needed by each program manager to plan for his area. The most significant policy to be added to the Manual was the aforementioned Policy on Budget Preparation, Review, and Approval.

RESULTS

In the "Problem Definition" section above, three general problem areas were identified which the planning process should have an impact on if it is to be regarded by the college as successful: optimizing results in the face of a contracting resource base, providing for effective delineation of authority and responsibility, and responding to a shifting student market. It would be premature to evaluate the impact of the planning process on these areas after only the first two years of the four-year project, but the college has moved far enough along to discern some significant short-term results.

--Managing a Contracting Resource Base--Although the new budget cycle has not been completed, the Priorities Advisory Committee has already done more than anything else to increase both the efficiency and the effectiveness of our diminishing resources. On the basis of its review of current programs the Priorities Committee recommended and the president has approved a major cutback in part-time instructors, to be accompanied by a corresponding increase in the productivity of full-time instructors without creating any faculty overloads; a hiring freeze to reduce excess staffing levels; and a 5% across-the-board cutback in nonsalary expenditures. The Committee's recommendations set in motion a new faculty requirements identification procedure based on ideal class size, projected enrollment, and other parameters to replace the less efficient existing process. As a result several faculty members were reassigned part-time to different divisions where they were qualified to teach. For the longer run, the new procedure may lead to adjustments in staff levels through attrition or long-term faculty redevelopment. The Committee also recommended major cutbacks in two programs it considered peripheral to the central educational purposes of the college - athletics and student transportation. The president is giving serious consideration to a sharp cutback in these programs and has already reassigned their directors elsewhere in the college.

--Effective Delineation of Authority and Responsibility--Progress on this area is more difficult to ascertain at this point. The Linear Responsibility Chart has helped to clarify areas of responsibility, at least on paper, delegating program planning, budgeting, and management responsibilities to mid-managers and general supervisory, coordinating, and authorizing responsibilities to higher level managers. The Policy on Budget Preparation, Review, and Approval has further clarified the division of responsibilities. It gives program managers authority to control the allocation of funds to salaries and equipment as well as other operating expenses, while top administrators are given responsibility for reviewing, consolidating, and setting priorities among programs and projects within their areas. Apart from promoting greater participation in planning within the chain of command, the planning process has involved large numbers of faculty and administrators and, where appropriate, some students and support personnel in the various committees and taskforces. There is a sense among instructors I have spoken with, even an expectation, that the faculty's views are being sought more carefully and paid greater heed in administrative planning and policy making.

There is, as might be expected, a wait-and-see attitude toward the planning process by some faculty members and administrators, including in some instances the president. They wonder if the planning process, particularly the delegated authority, will hold up in a real crunch or if it will be abandoned for more expedient solutions. The process is more cumbersome in the sense that decisions get routed through various organizational channels before the buck stops, but this greater attention to channels and "input" probably has produced broader acceptance and support and better internal coordination of the decisions as they are made.

I am less satisfied with the effectiveness of the goals, objectives, and performance measures in creating accountability for program outcomes. I had originally expected that the program objectives and performance measures, by providing feedback, would support program reviews, capabilities analyses, and decisions about priorities

among programs. As it turned out, the performance data was consulted very little while these decisions were being made. Some of the data was unavailable when needed. Other performance measures, for which data was available, were considered overly abstract or of questionable validity for basing key decisions on (for example, student responses to surveys of their perception of their educational or vocational progress). Performance data was difficult to interpret because we lacked a context of several years of historical data or comparable data from other programs or institutions. But it may also be possible that some of the performance measures we have developed so far don't measure those outcomes that the administrators are "really" interested in achieving, as discussed at the outset.

--Responding to a Changing Student Market--Of the three major problem areas, this is the one where the least progress and the least effort have been made. The college still does not have an adequate community needs assessment process or community input into the planning process in general. I am hoping that now that the planning process has been reasonably well established it will be possible to focus more attention on this area. We have attempted to involve students in the process through membership on committees and taskforces, but to date their actual involvement has been disappointing. This disinterest may be part of a general disinterest in participation outside of class, due perhaps, to our commuter-college nature.

DISCUSSION

It appears in retrospect that three factors contributed to the success of the planning and management process; the role of the president, adherence to the chain of command, and the role of the office of planning and research.

--The Role of the President--First among factors contributing to the process' success has been the constant support of the president. It's been said many times before, but bears repeating, that without the commitment of the number one person in the organization, any effort toward a systematic planning and management process is doomed. The Gadsden State case has borne this out. While taskforces and committees

deliberated over planning problems and made recommendations, and while the entire faculty and administration reviewed many of these recommendations and suggested changes, all the key recommendations related to the planning process came to the president's desk last, and they did not become effective until he authorized them. And when he has authorized recommendations, they have usually tended to stick.

--The Role of the Chain of Command--A second factor contributing to the process' success has been our insistence on strict adherence to the administrative chain of command. We have avoided the pitfall of creating super planning bodies to make decisions that specific administrators should make. When a problem or decision related to the planning process comes to the CIP, the Committee will route the problem to the administrator it considers to have jurisdiction, as when it routed the development of academic performance measures to the Dean of Instructon. Only when the problem falls outside any individual's purview does the CIP deal with it directly, as when it recommended that the president form taskforces to develop institutional goals or personnel policies. Thus, rather than threatening to displace any part of the chain of command, the process has actually tended to sharpen lines of authority and responsibility. This may help to account for the minimal resistance that administrators have offered so far.

--The Role of the Director of Planning and Research--Throughout the first two years the director of planning and research has played a critical role in supporting and facilitating the planning process. While much of the substantive decisions related to the planning process have been made by taskforces and committees, I have provided direction to their work and relieved the heavy time demands on their members by collecting, reviewing, and passing on to them various techniques and sample products developed elsewhere, handling the detail work, preparing initial drafts of committee reports and policy documents, and generally greasing the wheels. During the early runs of the planning process I worked with each administrator to draft

goals, suggested performance indicators, and helped work through the details of their plans. I have conducted a number of "getting started" workshops for administrators and even their secretaries ranging from an hour to two days, as the need has arisen.

The office of planning and research provides a coordinating role in the collection, organization, analysis, and dissemination of data required for the planning process. Data is collected from existing institutional records, from published sources, and from surveys and questionnaires. Of course we have all the usual problems of incomplete data sets, delays in keeping data updated, low survey response rates, computer bugs, reliability and validity problems, etc., etc., etc.

Above and beyond the technical work, I find that my role requires almost continuous social navigation through the institution--seeking compromises, refining the planning system to fit the college better, building support among affected individuals and expediting key decisions and approvals related to the process. Office-hopping, phone calls, and base touching consume major portions of my days.

--Anticipating the Third and Fourth Years: Refinement and Full-scale Installation--At the same time, the planning and management process has forced crucial issues to the surface in the first two years of implementation, and these problem areas have formed the major agenda for the third and fourth years into the process.

One outgrowth of the planning process to date was the establishment of a Personnel Policies Development Committee to rectify the long-standing and increasingly problematic absence of adequate personnel policies and procedures at the college. This Committee grew out of a capabilities analysis which the CIP conducted on the director of planning and research. During the next two years the committee will be drafting and circulating for review policies and procedures covering the gamut of personnel administration from manpower planning to recruitment to retirement.

Getting adequate data for the planning process - on-time, valid, comprehensive, and in-focus - has emerged as a key problem, although one important step has been

taken in this regard. The planning process has made others besides the director of planning and research aware of the need for better data. This awareness is a first crucial step along the way to committing the resources necessary to support a management information system. A request-for-proposal has been prepared, issued, and responded to by several computer companies, and it is hoped that upgraded hardware will make it possible to proceed in the next two years with the development of an adequate management information system.

Another problem to surface has been the realization that the college is unable to measure or otherwise document its progress in achieving its most central goals - equipping its students with basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This realization led to the formation of still another taskforce, the Instructional Outcomes Taskforce. Composed of faculty members from each division and chaired by our coordinator of instructional development, the Instructional Outcomes Taskforce is identifying in competency-based language those skills and knowledge which each degree-seeking student should attain before he or she is awarded the degree. While this taskforce has the most challenging and long-range assignment of any taskforce in the planning process, I also regard its work as having potentially the most significant impact on the institution's instructional programs.

REFERENCES

Bers, John A., "A Simple Technique for Getting Started with MBO," presented at the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Association for Institutional Research.

Green, E.J. and P.C. Winstead, "Systematic Institutional Planning," Educational Technology, July, 1975, pp. 33-35.

Scott, Bruce R., Stages of Corporate Development, Copyright 1971 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

OCT 2 1 1977

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES